Mātrceṭā ranks among the most famous Buddhist poets of India, and this renown he mainly won as an author of hymns, Stotras. His two main works are the *Varnjbhavarnastotra*, “The Praise of the Praiseworthy”, and the *Śatapāṇīcāśātha*, the “(Praise in) 150 Verses”.¹ The Chinese Indian-pilgrim Yijing, for instance, writes about these two hymns in his travel record: “... in India all who compose hymns imitate his style, considering him the father of literature. Even men like the Bodhisattvas Asāṅga and Vasubandhu admired him greatly. Throughout India every one who becomes a monk is taught Mātrceṭā’s two hymns as soon as he can recite the five and ten precepts (Śila). This course is adopted by both the Mahāyāna and Hinayāna schools.”²

Little is known about Mātrceṭā’s date. The fact that the *Mahārājaśakḳalekha*, “The Letter to the King Kaniṣka”, is ascribed to him, has led various scholars to differing attempts at dating him.³ These attempts have in common they are all built up on several hypotheses. The problem is a difficult one, and I cannot offer a convincing date either, but at least a new terminus ante quem. While preparing a new edition of the *Varnjbhavarnastotra* I came across two lengthy quotations from this stotra in the *Mahāprajāpāramitā-upadesa*. This work was translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva between 402 and 406, and as Kumārajīva came to China in 384, this would give the first half of the fourth century as the latest possible date for the composition of the hymn.

Mātrceṭā’s fame has also spread into Tibet. Both Bu ston and Tārāṇātha deal with him, Bu ston briefly fearing the stories to be too many, but Tārāṇātha at length.⁴ Apart from their Tibetan translations, both these Stotras are also not unknown to the living Tibetan tradition, at least that of the dGe lugs pa school, as Coṇ kha pa several times quotes from them in his *Lam rim chen mo* and his sNags rim chen mo.⁵

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Besides these two famous hymns there are about 18 works connected with Mātrčeta's name in one way or another. The bulk of them are preserved only in Tibetan translation, and most of them are Stotras.7 Obviously Mātrčeta was famous as the writer of Stotras par excellence, and therefore all those ascriptions should be accepted with caution, until they can be confirmed by independent sources and by means of internal criteria.

One of these works ascribed to Mātrčeta is the Ṭrīratnastotra (dKon mchog gsum la bstod pa), a very short text consisting of four verses only. It is presumably lost in Sanskrit, but preserved in a Tibetan translation. Despite its brevity it must already in India have been of some importance as it was considered worthy of commentary. In the Tanjur the text of the Stotra itself is immediately followed by a comparatively extensive commentary, a Vṛtti, of about six leaves in the Peking edition. At the end of the Stotra there is only an author's colophon, but as the quoted lines in the commentary agree verbatim with the Stotra itself, the translators' colophons of the commentary most probably holds true for both works. Accordingly the translation was carried out by Jāňašānti and dPal gyi lhun po'i sde, hence in the beginning of the 9th century as dPal gyi lhun po was a contemporary of the great translator dPal brcgs ral 'lita.8 The translation is, however, not listed in the old catalogue of Lhan dkar.

According to its colophon the commentary was written by rGyal ba'i sras, a name to which would correspond a Sanskrit Jīnaputra. Little is known about this author; the works connected with his name all belong to the Yogācāra tradition.9 As the Stotra commentary is written from the viewpoint of the same school,10 the ascription of the colophon may be correct or is at least a possibility to be reckoned with.

To return to the Stotra itself, mention must be made of a second indication of its importance at an earlier time, namely the existence of three Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang which preserve its text. Two of them belong to the Pelliot collection in Paris; they are numbered 135 and 136 in the inventory of Lalou.11 Both comprise only a single leaf; No. 135, a rather well written folio of about 7 by 52 cm, is complete, but without a colophon. The other, No. 136, is a smaller folio of about 7 by 21 cm and written less carefully. The text continued on a second leaf, which, however, appears to be lost. The third manuscript, also consisting of one leaf, belongs to the Stein collection in the India Office Library; it is numbered 281 in L. de La Vallée Poussin’s catalogue,12 measures about 8 by 44 cm and contains an interlinear gloss written in very small dBu-med characters. Apart from a certain number of variants the text of all three manuscripts agrees with the canonical translation.

There is even a third indication of the importance of this short Stotra and especially of its early popularity among the Tibetans, namely a second commentary preserved in the Tibetan Tripiṭaka. As it was written by a Tibetan himself, it did not come to be included in the Stotra section but was incorporated among the few works of Tibetan authors in quite another part of the Tanjur. This second commentary was composed by the famous Ye šes sde, one of the most important translators at the beginning of the 9th century. Its title runs Sānis rgyas gcbo'i rgya ḍer 'grel pa, which instead of the original title Trīratnastotra takes up the first line of the hymn, i.e. sānis rgyas gcbo la phyag 'chal lo.13

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12 Louis de La Vallée Poussin, Catalogue of the Tibetan Manuscripts in the India Office Library, Oxford 1962, p. 94f. Dr. Helmut Eimer, Bonn, kindly provided me with a copy. – The manuscript was independently identified by Hakamaya, cf. p. 21 of his article.
13 Cf. Hakamaya, p. 3; for an analysis of the structure of this commentary see ibidem, pp. 9–11, for a Japanese translation pp. 11–21.
Despite its classification as rGya 'cher 'grel pa it is shorter than Jinaputra's work, comprising about four leaves in the Peking edition, which however can partly be explained by the fact that it does not comment on the first verse of the Stotra, which it merely quotes.

Compared to Jinaputra's work Ye šes sde's commentary is more clearly structured, stating for each verse a number of phun sum chogs pa — between four and five — which are to be expressed by the verse and on the basis of which the verse is explained. While Jinaputra's commentary contains at least seven quotations — from the Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra (No. 2036, fol. 124v2; all references are to the Peking edition), the Prajñāpāramitā (128r5), from Vasubandhu a long and rather poetical verse (126v6) which, however, I was not able to identify, and from unnamed sources (fols. 126v3, r5, 127r4, 128r2) — Ye šes sde does not quote a single time from the scriptures. There is no indication that he has used or even known Jinaputra's work, but as his commentary is also based on the canonical translation of the Stotra this seems to be rather likely; moreover, it is also written from the Yogācāra point of view.16 From an allusion to a comparison in the Varnārbavargastotra there is no reference at all to Mātṛceta.17 Finally, the commentary does not conclude with the usual transferring of merit which, incidentally, also holds true for the two other works of Ye šes sde which came to be included in the Tanjur.

The interlinear gloss in the Stein manuscript No. 281 seems to be mainly based on Ye šes sde's commentary. First it mentions the occasions when to recite the Stotra; then it presents the same number and follows with one exception the same order of phun sum chogs pa as does Ye šes sde. On the other hand, the wording is not exclusively derived from Ye šes sde's commentary; it contains, for instance, a short quotation from the Buddhabhumīti which is neither referred to by Jinaputra nor by Ye šes sde. However, in the Ita ba'i khyad par, another of his works, Ye šes sde uses the same quotation in the same context,19 and therefore this interlinear gloss is at least directly connected with his exegetical tradition.

Before turning to a critical edition of the Stotra — which abounds with an amazing number of variants, as will be seen — a word should be said regarding the authorship of this small work.20 It can hardly be called into doubt that the Tibetan transcription ma ti ci uṭra in the colophon is meant to stand for Mātṛceta, as it is well in accordance with the transcriptions found in the colophons of the other works transmitted under his name. The colophon itself is most probably based on a statement in Jinaputra's commentary, where Mātṛceta is named as the author of the last three verses (cf. p. 181). Jinaputra seems to be mentioned by Xuan Zang, which would place him not later than the 6th century.21 As long as Jinaputra can be regarded as the author of the Vṛtti, his reference would serve as one of the earliest mentions of Mātṛceta's name, the still earlier quotations in T 1509 being anonymous, and therefore carries some weight regarding the authorship of the Stotra. On the other hand the contents of all the remaining works ascribed to Mātṛceta offer no connexion whatsoever with a Yogācāra background except for the fact that Dignāga composed an enlargement of the Satapācāsaśīka.22 Therefore further corroboration would seem to be called for, before the ascription can be accepted wholeheartedly; nevertheless it is a possibility to be kept in mind.

16 Cf. Hakamaya, p. 8f.
17 Peking edition no. 5848, fol. 270v7, ad Varnārbavarga III.10cd.
18 For an edition see the appendix; Hakamaya was unable to utilize this gloss as he could not obtain a sufficiently enlarged photograph (cf. p. 21 of his article).
19 For this work see David Seyfort Ruegg, Autour du Ita ba'i khyad par de Ye šes sde (version de Touen-houang, Pelliot tibétain 814), in: JA 269 (1981), pp. 207–229, especially p. 221; cf. also Hakamaya, p. 9, note 33.
20 Cf. Takasaki 1972, p. 38, and Hakamaya, p. 22; both refrain from a discussion of this problem, but Hakamaya points to the possible consequences for the chronology of the development of Yogācāra terminology.
1. **Triratnastotra**

   C  Cone edition, vol. ka (209), fol. 121r2–7
   D  Derge edition, no. 1144, vol. ka, fol. 104v4–105r1
   P  Peking edition, vol. 2035, fol. ka, 122v4–123r1
   135  Pelliot tibétain 135
   136  Pelliot tibétain 136
   281  Stein Collection no. 281

2. **Commentary I:** *Triratnastotravrtti* of Jinaputra (rGyal ba'i sras)


3. **Commentary II:** Sañs gnyas gcen bo'i rgya 'cher 'grel pa of Ye sses sde

   Com. II D  Derge edition, no. 4361, fol. 228vl–231v6
   Com. II P  Peking edition, no. 5848, fol. 269v7–274r1

Text and Translation of the *Triratnastotra*

/dkon mchog gsum la bstod pa //
rgya gar skad du / tri ratna sto tra // bod skad du / dkon mchog gsum la' bstod pa // dkon mchog gsum la phyag 'chal lo //

1) sañs gnyas gcen la' phyag 'chal lo //
skyob pa' chos la' phyag 'chal lo //
dge 'dun che la' phyag 'chal lo //
gsum la rtag tu phyag 'chal lo //

2) chogs10 chen gnis11 rjogs mkhyen bzi sku gsum grub //
nram rtag mi12 mna' ci13 yan sa ler14 mkhyen //
chos sku mkha15 'dra gzugs sku16 mjes skus17 ldan18 //
sañs gnyas dpag bsam19 'dra la20 phyag 'chal lo //

3) chos dbya22 rgyu mthun23 gsuñ24 rab25 bçu gnis dañ //
chos nids26 skye 'gag med27 ci'n spros las28 dben //
de la29 dmi20 te31 yon tan kun grub32 pa //
legs rgyu33 dam pa'34 chos la28 phyag 'chal lo //

1) minute scriptum in P, deest in D
2) tranq D
3) gyi D
4) The homage is missing in CP.
5) pa'i D, 135, 136, 281, Com. I D, Com. II
6) 281 inserts gus par.
7) 281 inserts gus par.
8) 281 inserts gus par.
10) chos 136
11) gnis pa 135
12) myi 135, 136, 281
13) 135
14) le CPD, Com. I, Com. II P
15) mkha' 281; nam mkha' Com. II P
16) gzugs bsku P
17) sku Dr; dgor 135, 136, 281
18) ldand 281
19) // deest in 136
20) bsam 281
21) 135, 281 insert gus par
22) chos dbya 281, Com. II : chos kyi dbya 136 : chos nids CDP, 135, Com. I
23) 'thon 281, Com. II P
24) gusus 136
25) gsum rab: yan lag 281
26) chos nids 136, 281, Com. II : chos la CDP, 135, Com. I
27) myed 135, 136, 281
28) la CP, Com. I P
29) las 135, 136
30) dmyigs 135, 136, 281
31) na 136, 281
32) sgrub Com. I P
33) rgyud C; gzi 135, 136, 281
34) dam pa'i deest in 136, 281
35) 135, 136, 281 insert gus par
[4] ṭon moṅs gsrib36 dan37 šes bya’i38 gsrib pa dag //
    gien pos rim29 par41 bsal42 te43 sar bzung44 pa53 //
    sems can don mjād sāṅs rgyas žiṅ sbyoṅ46 ba37 //
    ‘phags pa’i dge ‘dun ché48 la49 phyag ‘chal lo //

dkon mēhog gsum la51 bstod pa52 slob dpon čhen po ma ti ci ţas53 mjād pa rjogs so //

36) gsrib C, 135
37) dan / 136
39) End of 136
41) pas 135
43) nas CDP, Com. I; CP insert sāṅs rgyas (probably influenced by the next line)
44) gsra 135, 281 : žugs Com. I, Com. II P
46) sbyoṅ P
48) ‘phags pa’i dge ‘dun ché: dge ‘dun bcon 281
50) End of 281; 135 continues with another two verses of unknown origin:

bön mād kun mēhog gser gi ri bo ‘dra //
spyan myiṅ dag yas pad ma leh ḍra n gən ‘dra //
chems dkar gsams pas dner na ḍun dan ‘dra //
bön mād dge ri rgyal sku la gus par phyag ‘chal lo //
gdan biṅ tugs kyi bön mād bzung sō ‘chal //
stūd gsum phan mjād bön mād bge bo mēhog //
‘kams gsum sūd sīn mā lus žir mjād pa //
‘gro bī don phyir bön mād btsun chos kyi gdan la bzung //

End of 135; the rest of the line is empty.
51) gyi D
53) tras CP

1. Homage to the Buddha, the Guru!
   Homage to the Dharma, the Protector!
   Homage to the great Sāṅgha!
   Constantly homage to the three!

Apart from the manuscripts no. 136 and no. 281 and Com. II all other versions read bdag phyag ‘chal, “I pay homage”, in the last line. As the original surely must have been a Sūkha, it is difficult to imagine how an equivalent to bdag could have been fitted into the line. For a possible Sanskrit original cf. Sylvain Lévi, Sanskrit Text from Bali, Baroda 1933, p. 79:

    namo buddhāya guruva namo dharmāya tāya ine /
    namah saṅghāya mabate tribhīyo ‘pi satatām namah //

cf. also the first verse of the Sugataapañcatrimśatstotra, also ascribed to Mātrceṣa and preserved only in a Tibetan translation,23 and the introduction to the Chinese transcription of the Prajñāpāramitābhyāsyasūtra.24

The first verse is obviously common Buddhist property. Ye šes sde merely quotes it; Jinaputra defines it as bstod pa mdor gsums pa, “concise Stotra”, and explains that the following has been written by the Ācārya Mātrceṣa as an enlargement (fol. 124rposite).

2. To him who has finished the two great accumulations and accomplished the four wisdoms and the
three bodies,
who is free of deceiving conceptions and knows everything clearly,
to the sky-like Dharma-kaya and the well-shaped Rupa-kaya,
homage to the Buddha who is like something wishfulfilling!

Jinaputra quotes from the Samdhinirmocanasutra saying that dana, sila and ksanti belong to punya,
dhyana and prajna however to jhana, while sivya belongs to both. This, however, does not agree with
the textus receptus of the Sutra, where not only sivya but also dhyana is connected with both accumu-
lations.26

3. To the twelvefold teaching which is a natural outflow of the dharmadhatus,
to the dharmatata which is without origination and extinction and free from pluralistic appearances,
which taking this as an object has accomplished all qualities,
homage to the cause of the good, the holy Dharma!

Against the mss. 136 (unmetrically: chos kyi dbyin) and 281 and Ye sde's commentary, the
canonical versions (Stotra and commentary) and ms. no. 135 all read chos niid (dharmatata) in the first
line. This shows that the Dunhuang mss. do not stem from a common source; moreover it raises the
question which reading has to be regarded as the original one. Jinaputra briefly explains dharmatata as
the emptiness of the two kinds of ego. Ye sde's explanation, however, is much more detailed; he
says: "If one takes the Indian word for dbyins, it is dhatu, and if dhatu is translated into Tibetan, then it
is dbyins. The meaning of dbyins is 'cause'. What is to be understood by the meaning 'cause' for dbyins?
This is the empty and egoless dharmatata of all dharmas. How does this empty dharmatata come to be a
cause? If one takes this empty and egoless dharmatata as object and understands it correctly, then the
dharmadhatus becomes the basis for the appearance of the twelvefold teaching ..." (fol. 271v5). Ye sde's
wording does not make it definitely clear whether the Sanskrit original of the Stotra was known to
him; as he uses the canonical translation, this is not necessarily the case. His explanation appears to be
based, however, on other canonical sources. Thus Vasubandhu explains in his Madhyantavibha ga II.14 (a translation, by the way, of Ye sde): "dharmadhatus is a synonym of emptiness because emptiness is the cause of the holy dharmas, for the holy dharmas emerge from it as the
object."28

Vasubandhu explicitly adds that here dhatu means 'cause', hetu.

The matter becomes still clearer if the rest of the line is taken into consideration. In his Tik ga at
Madhyantavibha ga II.14 Shihramati explains: "The dharma which is teaching, that is to say the sutras etc., this dharma is an outflow of the dharmadhatus, because it has emerged on account of the dharmadhatus which is pure in every respect and known as dharma."27 In Sanskrit the first part of this explanation reads: prabhavito dharmadhatusiniyandaha sutradhikho desanadharmaḥ. The Tibetan corre-
spondence, also translated by Ye sde, reads: chos kyi dbyin kyi rgyu mthun pa mdo la sogs pa bstan pa'chos rab tu byun ba'i phyir ro (Peking edition, no. 5534, vol. chi, fol. 78r7). This parallel appears to be so striking that it leads to two possible conclusions, which are, however, rather contradictory: either the original Sanskrit of the Stotra had dharmadhatus and Ye sde, knowing the original, corrected an inaccurate translation, or alternatively the Sanskrit had dharmatata, the correct translation of which was changed by Ye sde on account of explanations like the one from the Madhyantavibhagatika.

The problem continues into the next line. As a variant reading of chos niid at the beginning of the second Pada we find chos la, again in ms. no. 135 and in the canonical versions, another indication of their relationship. Ye sde explains: "The dharmatata of all dharmas is from the beginning unorigi-
nated, unborn and free from all pluralistic appearances." (fol. 272r). Jinaputra has characterized the first

Thanks are due to the India Office Library for providing a microfilm without which the reading of the very small *dbu med* would have been impossible.

The understanding of the reading *chos la*, however, appears to be difficult, as every line should depend on the *namas* formula at the end of the verse. Taking Ye shes sde’s version as the correct one, the other two readings are difficult to explain. There is no significant gap in time which could be held responsible for manuscript corruptions, and it is not easy to believe that terms like *dharman* and *dharmata* could have been translated in such an unusual fashion. In any case it is remarkable that Ye shes sde explains *dbatu* in such detail. *Dbatu* is the only Sanskrit word which he refers to; conceivably he knew of the other reading *chos ntid* and thereby tried to reject it.

4. To him who gradually removes the *klesāvarana* and the *jneyāvarana* by antidotes and dwells on the *bhisīnis,* who brings about benefits for the beings and purifies the Buddha-fields, homage to the noble and great Saṅgha!

Appendix

Text of the interlinear gloss in the Stein manuscript No. 281; the number of the corresponding line of the Stotra is given in square brackets. — Thanks are due to the India Office Library for providing a microfilm without which the reading of the very small *dbu med* would have been impossible.

[Verse 1a–d] // lha gaṅ ga (? Reading unsure) mchog rten las scogs ste gaṅ du phyin kyaṅ / dkon mchog gsam gyi yon tan ‘di bzin rjes su dran žiṅ / chig tu slas (? Reading unsure, ms. partly worn off; for zlas?) nas / lus bsdud de phyag ‘chal bar bya’o // de la dkon mchog gsam gyi yon tan bsam gyis myi khyab / brjod par myi nus mod kyi chigs bcad ‘di don čiṅ phyag ‘chal ba’i che / rtag tu yid la bya žiṅ phyogs cam žig mdor bsdu na / chig bcad daṅ po’i rkaṅ pa gsam gis dkon mchog gsam re re la phyag ‘chal ba daṅ / rkaṅ pa tha mas de gsum spyir bsdu te phyag ‘chal bar bstan to // de nas chig bcad rkaṅ bžis / re res yon tan brjod čiṅ phyag ‘chal bar bstan pa ste /

de yaṅ saṅs rgyas la ni rgyu phun sum chogs pa daṅ / ’bras bu phun sum chogs pa daṅ / raṅ bžin phun sum chogs pa daṅ / bdag gi don phun sum chogs pa daṅ / gžan gi don phun sum chogs pa daṅ / rnam pa līnas bstan to //

chos la ni rgyu phun sum chogs pa daṅ / raṅ bžin phun sum chogs pa daṅ / ’bras bu phun sum chogs pa daṅ / gžan gi don phun sum chogs pa daṅ / rnam pa bžis bstan to //

dge ’dun la ni rgyu phun sum chogs pa daṅ / ’bras bu phun sum chogs pa daṅ / gžan gi don phun sum chogs pa daṅ / bdag gi don phun sum chogs pa daṅ / raṅ bžin phun sum chogs pa daṅ / rnam pa līnas bstan te / mdo cam žig so so’i mchán tu bris pa yin no //

[2a] rgyu phun sum chogs pa yin ste bsod nams daṅ ye šes kyi chogs so / ’bras bu phun sum chogs pa ste / ye šes bzi daṅ sku gsum nīd do / de la sku gsum yāṅ ye šes kyi raṅ bžin du zad de saṅs rgyas sa ’i ti ka las / mye loṅ lta bu’i ye šes / ni chos kyi sko’o / māṃ pa nīd / so sor rtog pa’i ye šes ni / loı̇n spyod rjogs pa’i sku / bya ba bsgrub pa’i ye šes ni sprul pa’i sku žes ’byuṅ ste / saṅs rgyas kyi sion gyi smon lam gyi mthu daṅ / sems čan snod dag pa’i rgyu rkyen las de lta snaṅ no //

[2b] raṅ bžin phun sum chogs pa ste / gžun dag las mchān nīd ma ’dres pa yai mkhyan la / rnam par yaṅ myi rtoṅ go ze ’byuṅ ba lta bu yin bas / saṅs rgyas kyi raṅ bžin ni / rnam par yaṅ myi rtoṅ la / dus

26 The readings, however, differ: *chos la don dam pa’i chos so* (Peking, fol. 126r8–127r1); *chos ni dam pa’i chos so* (Derge, fol. 108r5); cf. Hakamaya, p. 7, note 26.


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